Tribunal security beefed up ahead of Hasina verdict today

The Daily Star (Bangladesh) / ANN

THE Supreme Court of Bangladesh has sent a letter to the Army Headquarters requesting deployment of troops to strengthen security around the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) ahead of the verdict in the crimes against humanity case against ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and two of her top aides.

Moajjem Hussain, spokesperson for the Supreme Court, confirmed the development, saying the letter was dispatched on Sunday. He noted that the court administration had also sent a similar request last Thursday, centring the announcement of the verdict date.

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 is scheduled to deliver its verdict today (Monday) in the case filed against the ousted prime minister and her two top aides over crimes against humanity committed during last year's July uprising.

Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim told reporters today that a part of the judgement read out in court will be broadcast live on Bangladesh Television (BTV) and private television channels, subject to final approval. He clarified that only the part of the judgement officially read out by the tribunal will be aired.

Last week, the ICT-1 formally announced that it would deliver the verdict on November 17.

AFP adds: Several crude bombs exploded in the Bangladesh capital Dhaka on Sunday, police said, heightening tensions ahead of a verdict on Monday in a case against ousted former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina over violence during street protests last year.

No casualties were reported, but the blasts further unsettled a city already on edge after days of unrest.

Hasina, 78, is being tried in absentia on charges of crimes against humanity for allegedly ordering a deadly crackdown on student protests in mid-2024. She denies any wrongdoing and has remained in India since fleeing there after her ouster in August last year.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner has instructed officers to open fire on anyone involved in arson or attempts to cause death by hurling crude bombs, local media reported.

Security has been tightened across Dhaka, in Gopalganj Hasina's ancestral home and a stronghold for her party and in two neighbouring districts, with Border Guard Bangladesh personnel deployed to reinforce local authorities.

Police and Rapid Action Battalion teams have been positioned around key buildings and major intersections, leaving parts of the capital unusually quiet.

BORDER Guard Bangladesh personnel stand guard outside the International Crimes Tribunal in Dhaka, on the eve of the court's verdict in the crimes against humanity trial of fugitive former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.—AFP

THE E20 full-electric eVTOL aircraft is seen during the 8th China International Import Expo in Shanghai.—AFP/file

China's 'flying taxis' reinventing future of urban air mobility

Terminals are an essential infrastructure, as they are where eVTOL aircraft take off and land

By Wang Xin

SHANGHAI: Four leading electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft makers have expressed their confidence in China's low-altitude economy and demonstrated the approaching future of urban air mobility at the eighth China International Import Expo (CIIE), which concluded last week.

Joining hands with overseas partners, the companies brought their aircraft to the expo, drawing massive attention and crowds from both home and abroad.

VerTaxi, a Shanghai-based eVTOL aircraft maker, attended the CIIE for the third consecutive time this year.

Showcasing its upgraded M1 eVTOL aircraft this year, the company also set up a simulated terminal at the expo, enabling visitors to experience the process of taking a "flying taxi" from ticket buying to boarding.

Terminals are an essential infrastructure in the low-altitude economy, as they are where eVTOL aircraft take off and land with passengers. The company simulated the real UAM operation process on site, visually demonstrating its efficiency and convenience of the emerging transport, at the estimated cost equivalent to or even lower than taking a regular or typical taxi.

With a flying taxi, visitors could hypothetically fly from the main venue of the expo to any place in Shanghai in around 10 minutes, to Pudong International Airport in 15 minutes at the price of about 100 yuan ($14.05), and to the West Lake in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, in 45 minutes for the price of about 260 yuan, according the company.

During the expo, VerTaxi secured intended deals from domestic and international clients, with a total value exceeding 2 billion yuan for 200 units of the M1.

"Back in 2023, we were the only one to bring the real-size aircraft to the CIIE, and this year we saw four. The low-altitude economy in China is flourishing, and we do feel the extensive public attention these days. Each day our booth was packed with visitors asking when the UAM operation would start," said Yue Tingting, vice-president of VerTaxi.

Similar cases were witnessed at the other three booths. Despite the aircraft from the four makers being in different configurations, they all told visitors about the future of UAM.

TCab Tech, at the CIIE for a second time, showcased its five-seat E20 tilt-rotor eVTOL aircraft, a configuration that the team believes will be the mainstream option for future eVTOL aircraft. Carrying its founder and CEO Yon Wui Ng, it completed its maiden manned flight on Oct 21.—China Daily / ANN

False national heroes

The Soeharto clan, through their supporters, have long been trying to get the Subianto govt to bestow the 'hero' title on him

Editorial — The Jakarta Post

PRESIDENT Prabowo Subianto has created a new subcategory of National Hero, an official title which the country awards to its best sons and daughters for outstanding services to the nation.

This new category is for 'false heroes' to accommodate Indonesia's second president Soeharto, who ruled the country from 1966 to 1998 with an iron fist and with lots of bloods on his hands.

He may be a hero to some, but to the nation, he cannot be but a false one, not until we clarify his role in the military-led mass killing campaigns in the mid-1960s that led to his seizure of power which he held on to for over three decades.

We lament that President Prabowo ignored the protests these past few weeks in opposition to the plan to confer the title on Soeharto on National Hero Day on Monday.

Adding insult to injury, he added the name of Sarwo Edhie Wibowo, the chief of the Army's Special Forces who led the military's extrajudicial slaughter in the mid-1960s, to the list of this year's recipients of the hero title.

It is an affront to the nation's sense of justice, and goes against the values enshrined in the state ideology of Pancasila.

Massive corruption during Soeharto's reign brought the country to the brink of an economic collapse in 1998. He squandered massive windfalls from the oil booms of the 1970s and 1980s when Indonesia was a net oil exporting country. He enriched his family, relatives and cronies but left most of the nation impoverished.

Conferring the national hero title on Soeharto and Sarwo Edhie reopens an old national wound that has hardly healed from the bloodbath of the 1960s, when they led the Army campaign to crush the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) through extra-judicial mass killings conducted in collaboration with paramilitary groups.

We will never know the extent of the deaths because the military keeps preventing any attempt to dig into the truth about the circumstances of the political struggle that forced Sukarno, Indonesia's first president, to hand over power to Soeharto. But we know it was bloody and traumatic, and it has left a deep impact on the nation's psyche to this day.

Successive governments have since tried to erase this darkest era in the national history from our collective memory. The current project to rewrite the national history will not likely lead to an admission of the genocide of the 1960s.

Soeharto was clearly a historical mistake, and if the proverb "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" rings true, we must brace ourselves to repeat that mistake.

We are seeing a consistent pattern to whitewash the horrors of the Soeharto regime, including the massacre and persecution of PKI members, supporters, sympathizers and their relatives, children and grandchildren, not to mention the way he silenced critics.

The ghosts of the victims and the perpetrators of that tragic period will not likely rest in peace until we as a nation own up to our history.

The Soeharto clan, through their supporters, have long been trying to get the government to bestow the hero title on him. Presidents Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Joko Widodo rightly rejected the request. Prabowo is too personally conflicted to be making the decision. As the former son-in-law of Soeharto, and one who built his career in the Army, he should have excused himself from making the final decision and deferred it to the next president.

The nation may one day accept Soeharto's contribution and services to give him the national hero title, a real one rather than false, but for this to happen, first we need to establish the role he played in the tragedy of the 1960s.

The military should stop preventing every attempt at uncovering the truths surrounding those years. This is for Soeharto's own good, for the military's own good and ultimately, for the good of the nation. Six decades have lapsed, surely the nation deserves to know the truth. Otherwise, we as a nation will never heal.—ANN

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Japan seeks dialogue with China over PM's remark

By Kazuhiko Hori

THE Japanese government intends to continue calling on China to hold dialogue aimed at stability in the Japan-China relationship, while still not accepting Beijing's demand that Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi rescind her remark during a recent Diet deliberation about the possibility of a "survival-threatening" situation for Japan.

In response to the Chinese Foreign Ministry's call for Chinese nationals to refrain from traveling to Japan, Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara stressed that "we will continue watching developments closely and making the appropriate response."

"Multi-layered communications are important precisely because of our different stances," Kihara said, suggesting that the government will persistently hold dialogue with the Chinese side.

To ease the situation, the government will consider dispatching Keiichi Ichikawa, secretary general of national security in the Cabinet Secretariat, to China sometime soon.

"We should view this calmly," said Takayuki Kobayashi, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's Policy Research Council chairperson, during his visit to Akita Prefecture on Saturday,

Kobayashi called for de-escalating the situation, saying, "We'll keep striving for continued dialogue and making this important relationship constructive and stable."

Opposition parties have also called for a calm response.

Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan leader Yoshihiko Noda said, "China has reacted too excessively," while Democratic Party for the People leader Yuichiro Tamaki said, "It is important for both sides to maintain communications so that the situation will not escalate."

Takaichi is supported by conservative voters. According to one of her aides, she believes that if she retracts her remark in the Diet about a contingency in Taiwan, her supporters will not accept it. It is also possible that China may step up its demands if she backs down.

The government intends to search for a breakthrough that both Japan and China can accept, without easily making concessions.

It is also determined to be resolute regarding Chinese Consul General in Osaka Xue Jian's post on X in connection with Takaichi's remark. Xue wrote in the post, "There would be no choice but to cut off that filthy head without a moment's hesitation." Japan's government intends to handle his comment separately from the argument over Takaichi's remark.

Some in the government are calling for designating the consul general as a persona non grata. Governments of host countries can refuse to host a diplomat who has been so designated.

However, it is feared that taking such a step would prompt the Chinese side to take an even harder line and the bilateral relationship could become decisively worse.

A source in the Prime Minister's Office said that the government is aiming for a "soft landing" that will not complicate the issue further, while continuing to demand that China respond appropriately. —The Japan News/ANN

KUWAIT CITY: Omar al-Olama, (left) UAE's Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy and Remore Work, and Kuwait News managing director Abdullah Boftain, take part in a discussion at the Breaking Barriers 3: AI vs. EI — The Savior of Business conference at the Jaber al-Ahmad cultural centre.—AFP

MOSUL: Municipal workers push a stranded bus through floodwaters after heavy rainfall in this Iraqi city.—Reuters

BADAKHSHAN (Afghanistan): An Afghan man rides a motorbike along with a burqa-clad woman in a mountainous region in the Argo district.—AFP

NEWSMAKERS

K-pop star Nana subdues home intruder

SEOUL: K-pop star Nana helped overpower a home intruder and is recovering in hospital after suffering injuries during the tussle, South Korean police said on Sunday.

The intruder, a man in his 30s, broke into the K-pop star's home early on Saturday, before being taken down by Nana with the help of her mother and arrested.

The 34-year-old celebrity and her mother, who suffered serious injuries and lost consciousness, are being treated in hospital, South Korea's *Yonhap* news agency reported.

The intruder broke into Nana's residence in the suburbs of Seoul to steal valuables, a detective at the Guri Police Station told *AFP*.

"She and her mother overpowered the intruder, a man in his 30s, in a physical struggle, resulting in his arrest," the investigator said.

The suspect is in custody on charges of aggravated robbery, he added.

Nana, whose real name is Im Jin-ah, is a singer-turned-actress with a strong fan base who first rose to prominence as part of Orange Caramel, a sub-unit of the girl group After School. The trio's music video for *Catallena* has more than 35 million views on YouTube.

"Nana also sustained physical injuries while trying to escape the dangerous situation," Yonhap news agency reported.

"The mother has regained consciousness, and both of them are currently in need of treatment and complete rest." Nana's agency has not responded to *AFP*'s request for comment.

Nana debuted in 2009 as a member of After School before transitioning into acting, landing several leading roles in television dramas.—AFP

NANA (left) overpowered the intruder alongside her mother.—Instagram/jin-a-nana

SURABAYA (Indonesia)**:** People take part in a pigeon racing competition in the East Java province.—AFP

ASSAM (India)**:** A worker plucks fresh tea leaves at the Chota Tingrai estate in Tinsukia.—Reuters